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General Assembly Budget Ticker

The House of Representatives did pass their version of the state budget this week on a party line vote of 51-49. The bill, known as House Bill 1001, will go through many changes before it is passed into law at the end of April. The proposals in the bill, even if taken out at some point during the bill process, will be eligible to be included in the final version of the budget.

The Senate Finance Committee could start work on the budget as early as next week. The Budget Subcommittee has already been hearing testimony from the various state agencies and departments in an effort to gauge the needs of those involved.

You can track this bill online at www.in.gov/legislative. Click “Bills and Resolutions” and enter 1001 in the “go to bill” box.

Look here weekly for future updates as the budget debate continues in the General Assembly.

ROBERT GARTON

THIS WEEK IN THE LEGISLATURE

Week 7

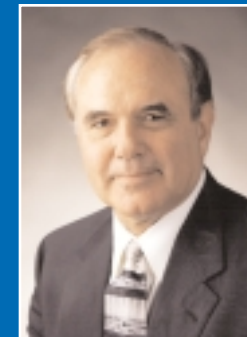
February 20, 2003

Dear Friends,

In light of recent events world wide, many Hoosiers are wondering what might happen next. In these troubling times, it is a comfort to remember that there are thousands of brave men and women who have sacrificed their personal lives to protect our freedom.

From Indiana alone, over 1,000 troops have been activated to serve in some aspect of the war on terror. Their strength makes each of them a role model to us all. Their display of selflessness and willingness to defend our freedoms deserves the highest praise. Though we are worried of what lies ahead, Hoosiers can take comfort in knowing that such fearless men and women are doing whatever it takes to protect our nation.

We must all remember to keep each of them and their families in our prayers and promote patriotism here at home.



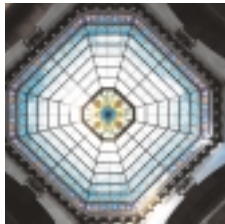
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THIS WEEK IN THE INDIANA LEGISLATURE

SENATE APPROVES BILL AIMED TO LIMIT "SPAM" JUNK E-MAIL

If you use an e-mail account, you've likely received e-mails carrying ridiculous subject lines that claim to have products that will change your life. Your inbox is sometimes cluttered with so many of these unsolicited "offers" that it is difficult to sift through them to find e-mails from friends or family. Anyone who has used e-mail has encountered the problem of "spam," or junk e-mail. Many companies use these unsolicited commercial advertisements because they are an easy way to reach huge numbers of consumers at very little cost. All a business needs is a computer and an Internet connection, and it has millions of people at its fingertips.



While there are legitimate uses for sending mass e-mails, the Senate this week passed Senate Bill 74, which would reduce the e-mails with questionable marketing practices that are being used more and more frequently. While some people admit they would rather receive junk e-mail than a telemarketing call during dinner, the impact spam has on citizens and employees goes beyond being bothersome.

To the recipient, these junk e-mails are not only annoying but they take up precious storage space on the e-mail account, sometimes causing personal e-mails to be undeliverable. The electronic letters are often misleading and boast fraudulent opportunities. For the Internet service

providers (ISPs), spam incurs tremendous costs as they must pay for the extra space taken up by these mass e-mails. They could also experience a loss of customers who switch to a new e-mail account to avoid spam. Businesses are harmed because they are forced to pay for software to filter out spam and for time spent by employees to sort through unwanted e-mail.

SB 74, sponsored by Sen. David Ford, R-Hartford City, would regulate deceptive commercial e-mails that clog the Internet service providers' servers and annoy people. This bill specifically makes it a crime to use a third-party's web site address to mask who is sending the commercial e-mail, to cover the tracks of where the e-mail originated or to put false or misleading information in the subject line of commercial e-mails.

Everyone knows about Indiana's telemarketing law to prevent unwanted, irritating sales calls. SB 74 is a 21st century version of the "no call" list. Under the legislation, people would see a reduction in commercial e-mails, especially the deceitful and misleading sort. Already 26 states have enacted laws regulating spam in order to protect citizens from unwanted and potentially harmful e-mails. Senate Bill 74 will now add Indiana to that list.

If you would like to track the progress of SB 74 online, visit www.in.gov/legislative and click on "Bills and Resolutions."

SENATE ADDRESSES SMALLPOX VACCINATION CONCERNS

With all of the uncertainty in today's world, especially with the escalation of tensions abroad, it is important for our elected officials to work together to help ease the public's concerns about terrorism and emergency response. I was proud to join my colleagues in the Indiana Senate this week as we voiced support for a measure that would protect those involved with the distribution of smallpox and other vaccinations in response to potential bioterrorism threats.

The attacks of September 2001 increased concerns that terrorists may have access to the virus and attempt to use it against the American public. In response to this concern, federal, state and local governments began working together to strengthen preparedness for bioterror attacks by expanding the national stockpile of smallpox vaccine. As part of the program, health centers were designated to receive quantities of the vaccine for distribution.

Senate Bill 485 provides immunity from civil liability in personal injury cases to hospitals and health care workers who provide the smallpox vaccine and other vaccination programs. A health care provider who administers any medical countermeasure against a bioterrorism incident or other public health emergency would be immune from civil liability for any injury or damage that results, except for gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct.

The smallpox vaccine helps the body develop immunity to smallpox and is made from a virus called vaccinia, which is a similar "pox"-type virus. The smallpox vaccine contains the "live" vaccinia virus — not a dead virus like many other

vaccines. While the vaccine does not contain the smallpox virus and cannot give you smallpox, the vaccine can have side effects. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), most people experience mild reactions that include a sore arm, fever, and body aches. However, the CDC estimates that 15 to 49 of every one million people receiving the vaccination will have serious or life-threatening reactions. One or two people of every million likely will die.

The smallpox vaccination is expected to provide high-level immunity for three to five years and decreasing immunity thereafter. Historically, the vaccine has been effective in preventing smallpox infection in 95 percent of those vaccinated.

I believe that our hospitals and health care professionals should be able to focus on the task at hand without fearing a lawsuit. Questions about liability throughout the states is one reason the federal program is off to a slow start. This bill helps relieve some of those concerns for our medical professionals as they provide what may become a necessary service for the protection of Hoosiers.

The bill passed the Senate unanimously and will now proceed to the House of Representatives for consideration.

As of Feb. 4, Indiana medical authorities had administered 2,900 smallpox vaccinations. For more information on smallpox or the vaccination program, visit the CDC Internet site at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox> or <http://www.smallpox.gov>.

While we hope that the fears of germ warfare and bioterrorism will never be realized, it's important that we take precautions now.

